

amidst the terrible conflagration within, and the murderous fire of the attacking troops from without. When the contention terminated the French dead lay piled round the chateau, in the wood, and every avenue leading to it."¹

During the early part of the day the action was almost entirely confined to this part of the line, except a galling fire of artillery along the centre, vigorously returned by the English guns. This fire gradually extended towards the left, and some cavalry demonstrations were made by the French.

From the exposed position of part of the English troops on the sloping ground they suffered very severely from the French artillery, and the Duke of Wellington thought it advisable to move them back about 150 to 200 yards to the reverse slope of the hill. The artillery in consequence remained in advance, that they might see into the valley. This alteration was made between one and two o'clock by the Duke in person; it was general along the front or centre of the position, on the height to the right of La Haye Sainte.

This movement withdrew a considerable portion of the Allied troops from the sight of the French, and appears to have been considered by them as the beginning of a retreat: Napoleon determined in consequence to attack our left centre, in order to get possession of the farm of Mont St. Jean, or of the village itself, which commanded the point where the two roads met. Accordingly Comte d'Erlon moved forward with his whole corps" in four dense columns, supported by large bodies of cavalry, and covered by a tremendous cannonade. The English infantry were formed into squares to receive the cuirassiers. The French cavalry being in advance of their infantry on the left of the attack, the Duke of Wellington ordered the* English Life Guards to charge them. The cuirassiers were driven back on their own position, where the *chaussee*, being cut into the rising ground, left steep banks on either side. In this confined space they fought at sword's-length for several minutes, until some light artillery was brought down from the heights, upon, which the British cavalry returned to its position.

¹ *Origin and Services of the Coldstream Guards*, by
Colonel Mackinnon,